Glossary

A

absolute poverty A condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education, and information. Absolute poverty may depend not only on income but also on access to services.

alienation The experience of feeling left out or being on the outside. People who choose one strong loyalty over another risk alienation from an important part of their identity and from sharing in the collective consciousness of their group.

appeasement Giving in to demands. A foreign policy practised by Britain and the United States when they granted Hitler concessions in an effort to avoid World War II.

asymmetrical federalism The concept that all Canadian provinces and territories may not share power with the federal government in the same way.

B

bilateralism Agreements between two countries to work toward resolving issues that concern both countries.

C

civic nation A nation created by people — no matter what their ethnicity, culture, and language — who agree to live according to particular values and beliefs expressed as the rule of law.

collective consciousness An internal consciousness, or awareness, shared by many people. It may be based on a shared memory of and pride in specific events, which become myths and symbols of belonging.

collective security The condition of protecting all members of a group or collective from danger. The United Nations tries to ensure the collective security of all member states.

common human heritage The cultural inheritance from the past that all people share and that is preserved in world heritage sites, traditional skills and knowledge, and the arts.

conscription Compulsory military service. In Canada during World Wars I and II, the policy was controversial, especially among Francophones in Québec.

contending loyalties Loyalties that compete. People sometimes need to choose among various loyalties based on their commitment to those loyalties.

cosmopolitan Borrowing, adopting, and adapting values from many cultures.

crimes against humanity Widespread or systematic attacks against a civilian population, including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape or sexual slavery, enforced disappearance of persons, and the crime of apartheid.

cultural pluralism A belief or doctrine that holds that collectives should be encouraged to affirm and promote their unique cultural identity in a diverse society.

D

decolonization The process that occurs in a former colony when an imperial power withdraws. Decolonized countries can exercise sovereignty under international law and can join the United Nations.

domestic policy A plan of action that guides a government's decisions about what to do within a country. In Canada, domestic policy decisions may include changing federal laws, settling Aboriginal land claims, and spending tax revenues.

E

economic nationalists People who believe that a country's businesses and industries should be protected against foreign interests.

economic sanctions The action of cutting off trade with a country in an effort to force it to follow a particular course of action.

ecozone An area of the earth's surface that represents a large ecological zone and has characteristic landforms and climate.

equalization payments Revenues from federal taxes that are paid by the Canadian government to less prosperous provinces to ensure that public services are more or less equally available to all Canadians.

ethnic Racial, cultural, or linguistic characteristics. Many nations come into being because people share a collective identity based on ethnic characteristics.

ethnic cleansing A term that is used to make more socially acceptable the murder or expulsion of an ethnic nation from a territory.

ethnic nationalism Nationalism that is founded on shared ethnicity, culture, and language. People who share these traits may choose to create a nation-state based on their collective identity.

F

federalists People who support a federal system of government. In Canada, people who oppose Québec sovereignty and believe that Québec should remain a Canadian province, ensuring its place in Confederation.

foreign policy A plan of action that guides a government's decisions about its official relations with other countries. Also called foreign affairs or external relations.

G

genocide The killing of members of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; and deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.

gross domestic product The value of all goods and services produced in a country in a year.

gross national income The total value of the goods and services produced by a country in a year, whether inside or outside the country's borders.

H

Holocaust The English term used to describe the genocide of about six million Jews by the Nazis during World War II.

I

inflation A rise in prices accompanied by a drop in the purchasing power of money. Increases in the price of goods and services can threaten the economic security and interests of people in a region or country.

inherent right The right to self-determination that exists for Aboriginal peoples in Canada because they occupied the land and governed themselves for thousands of years before Europeans arrived in North America.

institution An organization established for and united by a specific purpose. Institutions provide services such as social assistance, education, and cultural events. They also often use national symbols and stories to define their identity and promote a sense of belonging.

international Between countries or nation-states. Nation-states may co-operate with one another to promote peace and security, trade, health, human rights, and the protection of endangered peoples and cultures.

internationalism The doctrine that all members of the global community accept collective responsibility for the challenges that face the world and that the motives of nations and nation-states must be respected in the search for solutions.

isolationism A policy whereby a country completely opts out of participating in international social, economic, political, and military affairs.

M

multiculturalism A belief, doctrine, or policy that embraces the idea of ethnic or cultural diversity and promotes a culturally pluralistic society.

multilateralism A policy that involves several countries working together to meet challenges and solve problems. The United Nations is multilateral in nature.

N

national interest The interests of the people of a nation. National interest may include economic prosperity, security and safety, and beliefs and values.

nation-state A country that has physical borders and a single government. Nation-states may be based on ethnic nationalism or civic nationalism or a combination of the two.

needs The basic elements — food, water, shelter, health — that humans require for survival.

non-nationalist loyalty A loyalty that is not embedded in the idea of nation. People may be loyal to and identify with family, friends, a region, an idea, a collective or a group, a way of life, and a culture.

O

odious debt A debt that is incurred by a despotic power, not to meet the needs of the people of the country but to strengthen the despotic regime.

P

patriated Transferred from the control of the British government to that of the Canadian government. The patriated Canadian Constitution of 1982 gave the provinces more rights and powers than they had under the British North America Act of 1867.

patriotism Love of country and an interest in its well-being. A sense of loyalty that may be expressed in various ways.

peacekeepers Armed forces who maintain peace by keeping enemies apart until a crisis can be resolved through diplomacy and negotiation.

peacemaking Allowing armed forces that were originally sent to maintain peace in a region of conflict to use force for reasons other than self-defence.

pluralism A belief or doctrine that a society should reflect an inclusive approach that encourages diversity. It assumes that diversity is beneficial and that diverse groups, whether these are cultural, religious, spiritual, ideological, gender, linguistic, environmental, or philosophical, should enjoy autonomy.

policy A plan of action that has been deliberately chosen to guide or influence future decisions.

propaganda Information and ideas that are spread to achieve a specific goal. Extreme nationalists may use misleading and dishonest information to create fear and insecurity and to persuade people to behave in certain ways.

R

reasonable accommodation A legal and constitutional concept that requires Canadian public institutions to adapt to the religious and cultural practices of minorities as long as these practices do not violate constitutional rights and freedoms.

reconciliation An act of resolving differences and repairing relationships that enables people to come to terms with past injustices and to coexist in peace.

responsible government A government that answers to the people rather than to colonial governors. The concept was introduced in Canada by Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin in the 1840s.

responsibility to protect A doctrine that says the United Nations must protect people within a state when that state violates or fails to uphold the rights and welfare of its own citizens.

rhetoric The art of shaping language to influence the thoughts and actions of an audience.

royal commission An independent public inquiry established by governments to examine complicated issues, hear testimony from people involved, and recommend ways of achieving a resolution.

S

segregation The forced separation of racial groups. Extreme loyalty to one racial group can lead to separate schools and living areas for racial minorities and eventually to ultranationalism and persecution of those minorities.

self-determination The power to control one's own affairs. National self-determination is the power of people within a nation-state or nation to make their own decisions about what is in their interest.

sovereignists In Canada, people who support the idea of Québec's becoming an independent nation-state that can control its own destiny.

sovereignty The political authority to control one's own affairs. Sovereignty may be distinguished from, and can sometimes conflict with, self-determination, which is a people's right to control their own affairs.

successor state A country created from a previous state. By international law, the people who lived in the predecessor state have a right to nationality in the successor state or to choose their nationality if the predecessor state is divided into more than one state.

supranationalism A policy by which countries agree to abide by the decisions of an international organization made up of independent appointed officials or representatives elected by member states.

T

tied aid Help that is given with strings attached. These strings may include agreements that the country receiving the aid will buy goods and services only from the country or organization supplying the aid.

trickle-down effect The theory that when people in developed countries have more money to spend, they will buy goods and services offered by businesses in less developed countries and that this spending will eventually help strengthen economies in the developing world.

U

ultranationalism An extreme form of nationalism. Ultranationalists are often fanatically loyal to their own nation and hostile and racist toward other nations.

unilateralism The policy of a country responding to events on its own without agreements with, or support from, other countries.

V

voluntary balkanization The separation of like-minded people into isolated groups that are hostile to people whose values differ from their own. This separation may result in a loss of shared experiences and values and can harm the structure of democratic societies.

W

wants Things that people desire, regardless of whether the desired object contributes to their survival.

war crimes Wilful killing, torture, or inhuman treatment; wilfully causing great suffering; and intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population or against those who are involved in a humanitarian or peacekeeping mission.